

in Muslim lands--Egypt, Turkey, Jerusalem-Jordan....narrow-spirited enclavism.....OTHER FACTORS MENTIONED: Arab slavery in Africa, Islam being the only religion under which human bondage still exists; Islamic status of women [lower than Judaism, much lower than Christianity]; cynical manipulation of the Palestinians in political pawn-camps; American study-centers on Islam [e.g., Hartford Th.Sem.'s periodical, "The Moslem World"]; Guru Nanak as successor to Mohammad in Sikhism; the language problem, French more than English language in Muslim lands; Stuff.

The other day [1976], a Mulim evangelist, an international banker from the Middle East, walked into my office to inquire [presenting question] as to why America [especially Americans as chiefly Christians] is so ignorant of, even disinterested in, his religion. I tried to respond, but he wasn't listening, as he'd obviously come to lay a trip. This thinksheet repeats some of the things I said, in hope that (1) in quieter mood, as he comes for another visit today, he may hear, and (2) my students in "the world's great religions" may listen also....Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_:

1. Jesus is pinned in between two religions which insult him, viz. Judaism, which Christians relate to as our chief child-parent relationship, and Islam, a post-Christian religion with which Christians have had only peripheral relationships, chiefly Kulturkampf from military confrontations and trade. In both cases, the insult is, sadly, structural, i.e. of the nature of the religion. In this sense, Jesus insults Moses [end of Torah (Deut.34.10-12): "there has not arisen a prophet...like Moses,...none like him"], Muhammad insults Jesus by being (your words in your first visit) what we Christians hold Jesus to be, viz. "the final prophet," and [to choose an example from native American religions] Joseph Smith insults Jesus (the Mormons now averaging 500 new chapel-buildings per year in the USA). Yes, Islam and Mormonism have some nice things to say about Jesus, but their peoplehood is constituted around a new prophet so distinct as to make these movements other than Christian sects-denominations-communions. [I've attached, on the religious-texts aspect of this point, #701, a visualization with commentary.]

2. You said Muslims and Christians should cooperate for world good, but did not mention Jews, though you were speaking in that city which has more Jews than any other city. I showed you the final section of Comstock's RELIGION AND MAN, paperback edition: Western, theistic religion is gathered as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. I do indeed hold that these three people, as having a common Abrahamic-historic-theistic heritage, should fellowship toward making a united witness of word and action wherever this can be done without violating any of the three distinct roots, viz. Moses, Jesus, and Mohammad. In the process, the expansionist motif [evangelism, like you!] of each of the three religions should not be neglected--in which connection this thinksheet can be viewed as an effort to convert you to Christianity....Further on Jews: Arab intransigence vis-a-vis things Jewish, including Israel, is a turn-off for the average American, and this turn-off slops over into coolness toward Islam [exacerbated, for many Americans, by the Black Muslims]. Then, of course, there's the near-zero Muslim population of the USA, and the fact that America is monolingual.

3. As to jihad ["holy war"], I mentioned the residue of threat-fear in Euro-Americans from the Muslim threat to European civilization, stemmed in the West in AD 732, but successful in the East in AD 1053. In American history, there's not much: the Barbary pirates, Nasser, the PLO [i.e., Americans' fear that PLO-type intransigence toward Israel will involve us in another Vietnam], OPEC [America's energy crisis, the Arab threat of another oil-squeeze], Muslim pressure against the only Christian-dominated nation in the Near East [the current "Lebanese crisis"].

4. Americans associate Islam with atavism growing out of a millenium of Arab fundamentalism, and aren't aware of the glory of Islamic civilization before or even of the present rousing of the sleeping giant [except for oil and its offshoots]. My old teacher, Samuel Zwemer, founded 30 Christian hospitals in Arabia, which, at that time, had no hospitals. And I recall my experiences

As for your pitch for your religion: while I thank God that you are a man of radiant faith and life, I'm not impressed with your arguments: (1) Every religion on earth presents itself as "the most natural"; (2) your having more ipsissima verba [exact words] from your prophet's mouth than we have from Jesus' is ambiguous, given the different ways the two are seen as authority; and (3) resurrection is common to Western faiths.